

Paramount - Congresswoman Linda Sánchez (CA-39), who is Paramount's new representative in the U.S. Congress in Washington, DC, recently paid a visit to Roosevelt Elementary School in Paramount to view the city's "Gang Resistance Is Paramount" (GRIP) program in action. GRIP is an innovative program developed by the City of Paramount in the early 1980's to steer children away from joining gangs.

"I've seen the studies saying that GRIP is a great program, but I wanted to see for myself first-hand," said Congresswoman Sánchez. "It's an impressive program for school and community safety. The children were clearly engaged and active in the class. And, the lesson plan gives a compelling message to kids about the harm that can come to themselves and their families if they get involved with gangs, and about the positive activities they can get involved with instead."

Congresswoman Sánchez was so impressed with GRIP that she later joined L.A. County Sheriff Lee Baca, Paramount Mayor Manuel E. Guillen, and other Paramount officials in a visit to the editorial board of The Los Angeles Times, which has expressed interest in the positive achievements of GRIP. Academic studies have shown that GRIP reduces gang involvement and is a prime cause for the major reduction in gang activity in Paramount in recent years.

Congresswoman Sánchez is now leading an effort to expand anti-gang educational programs like GRIP to other cities in our region so that gang recruitment can be reduced throughout our region.

"Our city should be proud," Paramount Mayor Manuel E. Guillen. "Paramount developed a model several years ago from which people in other communities now want to borrow. GRIP is such a positive educational program for school and community safety. And, programs like it hold the promise of reducing gang activity in cities throughout our area. Reducing the numbers of children joining gangs in neighboring cities is of course good for Paramount."

"I will also be working," said Congresswoman Sánchez, "with Paramount officials this year to seek funding for another one of Paramount's educational initiatives: the Math-Engineering-Science-Achievement program (MESA), which provides Saturday enrichment courses for middle school students in Paramount. I want to do everything possible to help our youth in their formative years."